

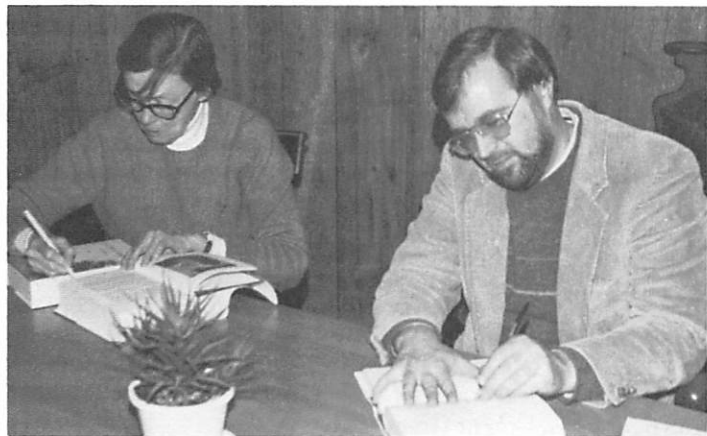


# The Bethel Courier.

VOLUME X, NUMBER 1

SPRING 1986

BETHEL HISTORICAL SOCIETY



*At the reception honoring the publication of the new edition of Eva Bean's EAST BETHEL ROAD, Margaret Joy Tibbetts, Chairman of the Society's Board of Trustees, autographs her foreword while Society Director, Stanley R. Howe signs his preface for those wishing autographed copies of the book.*

*Photo courtesy of Donald S. Brown*

## **SOCIETY PUBLISHES EAST BETHEL ROAD**

In January 1986, the Society received shipment of its long-awaited republication of Eva Bean's EAST BETHEL ROAD, which originally appeared in 1959. This remarkable local history, long out of print and generally unavailable for the past fifteen years, is filled with the history of an earlier era, much of which Miss Bean, a native of East Bethel, knew first hand. This new edition contains all 452 pages of the original book and adds over 300 more, bringing the history of this half of Bethel up to the present. Recorded here are changes in house sites and families, plus cemetery records and corrections of the first edition.

Printed on aluminum-free, rosin-free, and acid-free high quality paper, the book also boasts a handsome dust jacket which reproduces Susie Kimball's 1880 watercolor painting of East Bethel Road, looking east at Middle Intervale, the early center of Bethel. Printed by Smith and Town Printers of Berlin, New Hampshire, the book was bound by the New Hampshire Bindery in Concord.

This edition, which represents the Society's most ambitious publishing venture to date, was made possible through the transfer of copyright to the Bethel Historical Society by the heirs of Eva Bean. Three individuals worked more than a year on the supplement to the book, gathering and preparing the material for inclusion. These were Society members Agnes Haines, Mildred Jackson and Nancy Mercer, all longtime residents of East Bethel. The book was edited and steered

*(continued on page 2)*

## **SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PAST TWENTY YEARS Bethel Historical Society 1966-1986**

- 1966 — Society founded at a meeting in the Bethel Library
- 1969 — Society founder Eva Bean dies
- 1971 — Society incorporated
- 1972 — Dr. Moses Mason House placed on the National Register of Historic Places
- 1972-73 — Dr. Moses Mason House restored by the William Bingham II Trust for Charity
- 1974 — Dr. Moses Mason House given to the Society, dedicated, furnished and opened to the public  
Publication of booklet "Dr. Moses Mason and his House"  
Special Edition of the Bethel *Citizen* published in honor of the dedication of the Dr. Moses Mason House and the bicentennial of the settlement of Bethel
- 1975 — First annual Heritage Day held  
"Family Farm" exhibit and booklet published with the support of the National Endowment for the Humanities  
Microfilming of old newspapers project begun with the support of the Maine State Commission on the Arts and Humanities  
Eva Bean Research Room constructed with funds from the William Bingham II Trust for Charity  
Society awarded Certificate of Commendation by the American Association for State and Local History for "an effective program of preservation, publications, and education"
- 1976 — Society sponsors "Old Fashioned Fourth" in honor of nation's bicentennial observance  
*The Bethel Courier*, Society quarterly founded  
Society hosts Maine League of Historical Societies and Museums annual meeting  
Eva Bean Research Room dedicated during tenth anniversary festivities  
Historic marker system initiated, first one placed at Bartlett Cemetery  
Annual professional audit system established  
"Made in Bethel" booklet published
- 1977 — Society offers courses in history, genealogy and crafts for the first time  
Society hosts volunteer workshop sponsored by the American Association of Museums  
First Dr. Moses Mason Award given for best student historical essay  
Broad Street named to the National Register  
"Bethel's Broad Street" booklet published

*(continued on page 2)*

*(Society Publishes, continued from page 1)*

through its various stages of publication by another East Bethel native, Society Director Stanley R. Howe and includes a foreword by a friend of Miss Bean's, Margaret Joy Tibbetts, Chairman of the Society's Board of Trustees. Credit for drafting the transfer of copyright goes to Bethel attorney and Society Life Member, Gordon M. Gillies.

Eva Marion Bean, born in East Bethel in 1895, spent more than five years writing the original edition of this book. According to her Foreword, she published the book to ensure that a fence would be built around Bartlett Cemetery in East Bethel, one of the town's oldest burial grounds. She never lived to see this project completed but in 1976 it was finally accomplished under the leadership of the Society. Miss Bean's fund paid for the fencing and volunteers supplied the labor and posts.

A graduate of Gould Academy in 1913, Colby College in 1917 and Presbyterian Hospital School of Nursing in New York, Miss Bean practiced nursing for several years until the onset of severe arthritis forced her retirement. Thereafter, she spent much of her time researching the past of the Bethel area and Gould Academy. Miss Bean was instrumental in the founding of the Bethel Historical Society in 1966 and became its first secretary, serving in that capacity until her death in 1969. The archives room of the Society which contain many of her carefully prepared notebooks was named in her honor in 1976.

Nearly half of the 1,000 copy press run was sold prior to publication. Copies are still available and can be ordered by mail or picked up by visiting the Dr. Moses Mason House.

*(Highlights, continued from page 1)*

1978 — Constitution revised to add trustees and define other positions

Broad Street Historic District dedicated by Senator Edmund S. Muskie

Society receives news of endowment of \$250,000 from William Bingham II Trust for Charity to be received over the next five years

1979 — Society cookbook published

Annual endowment campaign begun

Historical Society calendar available for the first time

1980 — Society sponsors Oxford County Historic Resource Survey with grant from the Maine Historic Preservation Commission

First "Sudbury Canada Days" held

A. D. Shattuck's "Sunset at Bethel" on exhibit, loaned by Vassar College

Society Director attends Seminar for Historical Administration at Colonial Williamsburg

Society membership hits 400 level for first time

Faye Taylor Memorial Art Show established

Dr. Moses Mason Birthday party held for first time

Summer house moved to the Society grounds

#### **EDITOR'S CORNER**

The first half of the article on World War II has prompted considerable response, some of which will be published in forthcoming issues. One error has been cited; the Communist party candidate for president in 1940 was Earl Browder, not Bowker as it appeared in the last issue on page 3.

SRH

1981 — First film series held with the support of the Maine Humanities Council

Lapham's *History of Bethel* reprinted

Indian Raid '81 bicentennial and Indian Raid special edition published

New editions of "Molly Ockett" and "Dr. Moses Mason and his House" published

Summer house stationery offered for the first time

1982 — Gift of Twitchell folk art portraits to the Society

Adoption of personnel, accession and de-accession policies  
Museum Assessment Program grant

Gift of R. P. Tolman's portrait of Dr. Moses Mason

1983 — Society loans Dr. Mason portrait and other artifacts to the Maine at Statehood exhibit at Bowdoin College, Colby College and other locations throughout the State  
Society membership passes 500 level

1984 — "Grass Roots" history course offered to Telstar High School students for first time

1880 Atlas maps of Bethel reprinted

"Adams Chronicles" film series

Twitchell Portraits exhibits

Martha Fifield Wilkins exhibit

1985 — Publication of Thomas C. Hubka's BIG HOUSE, LITTLE HOUSE, BACK HOUSE, BARN: THE CONNECTED FARM BUILDINGS OF NEW ENGLAND which includes several Bethel Historical Society photographs

Museum Assessment Grant II awarded

Publication of Chester Harding catalog by the National Portrait Gallery containing photographs of the Mason portraits

"Maine at Statehood" exhibit

Conference on Rural Reform hosted by the Society

"A Good stand of Buildings" exhibit

"Early Peoples of Northern Maine" exhibit

"William Rogers Chapman, 1855-1935" exhibit

Society membership tops 600

1986 — Publication of a new and expanded edition of Eva Bean's EAST BETHEL ROAD

Long-Range Planning Committee formed

New railroad stationery offered for first time

## **BETHEL DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR PART II**

**by Stanley Russell Howe**

*EDITOR'S NOTE: The first half of this article was published in the last issue and is a revised version of a paper delivered at a 1980 meeting of the Society.*

Fall meant election time in Maine (which voted in September and would for many years to come). The liquor question was decided by a two to one margin in favor of keeping Bethel "dry" once more (perhaps the margin suggested another wartime sacrifice), and the Republican candidate for governor, Sumner Sewell, who had become well-known for his wartime leadership, won the town by a margin of nearly three to one (294-102).

In December 1942, pleas for Russian relief which appeared in the *Citizen* received a positive response in Bethel. Much of this support came from schools; students apparently did not share the misgivings of their elders in assisting a Communist nation in its struggle against Hitler's invading armies. A response to the town's generosity toward those in the war was received by the *Citizen* from a Royal Air Force serviceman in

Iceland thanking Bethel people for a pair of knitted socks which were much appreciated.

By the beginning of the new year (1943) war messages and newsreel propaganda were regular fare at the Bethel Theater on Main Street (now the site of the Bethel House). It was a difficult time for theaters in general because of the gas shortage. Among the enticements used in Bethel were reduced admission prices.

As thoughts turned to planting with the new year, Pearl Ashby Tibbetts (1885-1982) urged the establishment of Victory Gardens. She headed the effort in Bethel to encourage the growing of a variety of vegetables on land still owned by R. Glenn Murphy, just off Bridge Street near the Androscoggin River. Mrs. Tibbetts emphasized the desirability of good seed and early planting. Her leadership resulted in attracting a number of gardeners anxious to do their bit for the town's war effort.

In the spring of 1943 it was decreed by the federal government that slaughter houses were from that time on to have permits. This regulation was resented in some Bethel quarters as another example of governmental meddling.

Less controversial was the *Citizen's* warning that if bombs or mines were discovered they were to be reported to the authorities. The *Citizen* at this time also attempted to correct the rumor that bobby pins were to be unavailable for the rest of the war. It added that wartime was one of the worst times for rumors and urged readers to be certain of the facts before passing on information.

To expedite the distribution of reliable information, a neighborhood plan was adopted, and Alberta Croteau was selected to head the effort. Assisting her with their respective street(s) were Jane Van Den Kerckhoven, Paradise; Ruth Chapman, Broad; Helen Connolly, Church/Park; Grace Chamberlain, Upper Main/Philbrook; Lilas Coolidge, Lower Main/Railroad; Verna Dyke, Mechanic/High; Winona Davis, Skillington; Lillian Smith, Songo Pond/Mill Hill; Celia Gorman, Chapman; Elsie Davis, Elm/Winter and Marvel Hanscom, Vernon. Mrs. Croteau had charge of Mason/Spring streets.

At the same time that the neighborhood plan was established a Red Cross drive with a goal of \$1300 was being organized. Since Bethel had 1300 voters, declared the *Citizen*, it would seem realistic to expect at least one dollar from each toward the cause.

If fund raisers appeared optimistic about money, other commodities were not so plentiful. Stove pipe was in short supply in Bethel and everyone who could was encouraged to use bicycles (Victory Bikes) as much as possible to save gasoline. Restrictions were tightening on coffee, fuel oil, sugar, meat and butter. By May 1943, however, rubber boots and tires for farm equipment were ration-free.

Amid all this activity, several Bethel women led by Grace Coburn (1900-1967) organized an auxiliary to the state guard, which later elected Stephanie Thurston (1914-1985) as captain of the group. Various other organizations helped outfit soldiers and sailors with uniforms, rifles and blankets. Among these and their contributions were: the Rebekahs (\$806.25), Eastern Star (\$1263), Women's Society for Christian Service (\$93.75), American Legion Auxiliary (\$525), Ladies Club and Junior Guild of the Congregational Church (\$6993.65) for a total of nearly \$10,000.

By May 1943, the *Citizen* was reporting that the civil defense effort in Bethel was lacking support. Few had blackout curtains,

(continued on page 5)

## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

This year marks the Society's twentieth anniversary. Today's Society is a far cry from the very modest operations envisioned by the eighteen charter members who gathered in the Bethel Library twenty years ago this May to found the organization. Much progress has been made since those early days and we can all be proud of the success the Society has enjoyed through the efforts of many who have assisted it along the way. On June 1 there will be a special reception and program as well as an exhibit in honor of this significant milestone in the Society's history. I hope many *Courier* readers can attend.

Alden T. Kennett

## IN MEMORIAM

Died in Brewer, February 5, 1986, Eugenia M. Haselton, longtime Society member.

Died in Portland, February 28, 1986, Maurice Kendall, contributing member of the Society since 1981.

Died in Norway, March 18, 1986, Estella Kimball Martin, sustaining member since 1980.

Died in Grafton, MA, April 6, 1986, Edith Hayes Eypper, charter member of the Society and a longtime member of the program committee. Mrs. Eypper was a retired music teacher and owned the former David Sanborn farm at Middle Intervale.

Died in Rumford, April 25, 1986, Dale C. Thurston, Society president 1968-69 and generous donor.

## OFFICERS AND TRUSTEES OF THE SOCIETY 1966-1986

President: Charles Heywood, 1966-68; Dale Thurston, 1968-69; John T. Grover, 1969-72; E. M. Quinn, 1972-73; Barbara H. Merrill, 1973; Margaret Joy Tibbetts, 1973-76; John J. Willard, Jr., 1976-78; Catherine Newell, 1978-1981; Donald G. Bennett, 1981-84; Alden T. Kennett, 1984-

Vice President: Dale Thurston, 1966-68; E. M. Quinn, 1969-72; Margaret Joy Tibbetts, 1973; John J. Willard, Jr., 1973-76; Catherine Newell, 1976-78; Donald G. Bennett, 1978-81; Alden T. Kennett, 1981-84; Marvin Ouwinga, 1984-

Secretary: Eva M. Bean, 1966-69; Christine Grover, 1969-74; Maxine Brown, 1974-75; Judith Haskell, 1975-78; Edith Eaton Eddy, 1978-81; Mary C. Keniston, 1981-84; Thera Judson, 1984-85; Charles F. Raymond, 1985-

Treasurer: Faye Taylor, 1966-71; Robert B. Marshall, 1971-72; Gwendolyn Holt, 1972-74; Pearlina McMillin, 1974-76; Margaret Joy Tibbetts, 1976-79; E. Louise Lincoln, 1979-82; Margaret Joy Tibbetts, 1982-85; Mary C. Keniston, 1985-

Trustees: Elizabeth Mason Carter, 1970-73; Nell Valentine, 1970-72; Norman O. Mills, 1970-72; John T. Grover, 1972-75; Rosalind R. Chapman, 1972-74; E. M. Quinn, 1973-76; Floribel Haines, 1974-77; Donald B. Eddy, 1975-78; Pearlina McMillin, 1976-79; Suzanne Fiske, 1977-1980; Judith E. Haskell, 1978-81; Margaret Joy Tibbetts, 1979-82; Helen Morton, 1980-83; Edith Eaton Eddy, 1981-83; Catherine Newell, 1981-84; Ronald Snyder, 1981-84; Willard Wight, 1982-85; Persis Post, 1983- ; Ruth Wight, 1983- ; Donald G. Bennett, 1984- ; Mary C. Keniston, 1984-85; Margaret Joy Tibbetts, 1985- ; Donald S. Brown, 1985-



## SOCIETY SALES DEPARTMENT

The Society maintains a selection of modestly priced gifts and historical publications. These may be ordered at the prices listed below. Maine residents should include 5% sales tax. Orders under \$10 should include \$1 for postage and handling; those over \$10 but under \$20 should include \$2 and all those over \$20 should include \$3 for postage and handling.

Moses Mason House Tile \$3.50  
Stationery (package of ten sheets and ten envelopes)  
\$2 each

Moses Mason House  
Summer House  
Bethel Railroad Station

### Booklets

"Bethel's Broad Street" 75¢  
"The Family Farm" 75¢  
"Made in Bethel" 75¢  
"Dr. Moses Mason and His House" \$1  
"Molly Ockett" \$2

### Maps and Atlases

1880 Map of Bethel Hill \$2  
1880 Map of Entire Town (Bethel) \$2  
1878 Bird's Eye View of Bethel Hill \$1  
1858 Atlas of Oxford County \$6.50

Wood Tote (canvas) (Moses Mason Museum logo) \$12.50

Tote Bag (Moses Mason Museum logo) \$7.50

Placemats, 4 Season (set of four) \$7.50

### Special Editions

Bethel Citizen (1974) \$1  
Indian Raid '81 \$1

### Books

D. B. Wight, WILD RIVER WILDERNESS \$4  
Francis Parkman, THE GOULD ACADEMY STORY \$7.50  
Ruth Crosby, I WAS A SUMMER BOARDER \$3.50  
Ruth Crosby, FROM AN OLD LEATHER TRUNK \$3.50  
BETHEL HISTORICAL SOCIETY COOKBOOK \$5  
Thomas Hubka, BIG HOUSE, LITTLE HOUSE, BACK HOUSE  
BARN: THE CONNECTED FARM BUILDINGS OF NEW  
ENGLAND  
Paper \$19.95  
Cloth \$29.95  
Jean Lipman, RUFUS PORTER REDISCOVERED \$12.95  
A TRUTHFUL LIKENESS: CHESTER HARDING AND HIS  
PORTRAITS \$25  
Paula Wight, NEWRY PROFILES \$5  
Eva Bean, EAST BETHEL ROAD, \$45 until June 1  
(after June 1, \$50)  
William B. Lapham, HISTORY OF BETHEL, 1768-1890 \$45  
(available summer 1986)  
Bethel Historical Society Calendar, 1986 (half-price) \$2

### T-Shirts

Moses Mason Museum (Adult) (S,M,L,XL) \$6  
Moses Mason Museum (Child's) (4-6-8-10-12-14) \$5  
Sudbury Canada 1768-1796 (Adult) (S,M,L,XL) \$6  
Sudbury Canada 1768-1796 (Child's) (4-6-8-10-12-14) \$5

Post Cards: Dr. Mason, Agnes Mason,  
Moses Mason House

10¢ ea.

Members of the Bethel Historical Society are entitled to a 10% discount for purchases totaling \$10 or more. Please send orders to the Society at P.O. Box 12, Bethel, Maine 04217. They will be sent by return mail.

(World War II continued from page 3)

and not everyone was doing his part in preserving precious commodities useful to the war effort. One bright spot seemed to be the raising of \$5,000 by Bethel schools through the sale of bonds and stamps.

Schools were seen as a vital part of the domestic war effort in Bethel. Superintendent Carrie Wight proclaimed the school's role in the 1942 town report, noting that the "teachers have entered into the defense program of the community with a spirit of patriotism." She reported that most of the teaching staff had taken "first aid and nurse's courses" and regretted "the pupil's loss of time from the classroom" to support the war effort. This was necessary, she emphasized, since "our first duty is to win the war," and she added, "considered in this light a few days' loss of school is nothing if the time sacrificed by the pupils will aid in their safety for the future." Miss Wight viewed schools as "instruments for our defense in the future" to which "our loyalty . . . must not waiver." On this occasion she closed her remarks with the comment that school transportation might not for the foreseeable future be as convenient as parents would like, but changes were mandated by the federal government. She requested that both parents and pupils affected by these conditions "accept them as part of their contribution to the war program."

By 1944 Superintendent Wight was able to report that the war had definitely had an effect on the town's schools with the critical teacher shortage among the most pressing results. Nonetheless, she concluded her remarks that year with the following observation:

The teachers and pupils of Bethel have responded splendidly to the demands made upon their schools along different lines for winning the war. War bonds and stamps to the amount of over \$10,000 have been purchased during the past year. The schools have had several paper collections bringing the total collected to 15 tons.

Whether or not things were quite as rosy as Miss Wight suggested is not clear from the evidence. One change that had positive and lasting results was the introduction of the school lunch program in the village schools during the 1942-43 academic year.

In addition to education, another vital service also experienced the effects of the war. By the summer of 1943 there were questions of whether or not RFD mail delivery would have to be severely curtailed due to the rationing of gasoline. Albert Silver, carrier on Bethel RFD #2, found it was impossible to deliver the mail at times, and Earl Davis (1901-1977), mailman on RFD #1, was reported by the *Citizen* as "worried" about making his deliveries in the future.

During this period there was a particularly strong emphasis on stretching scarce resources. A system of loans for pressure cookers was established. There was also a Victory Pulpwood campaign since wood was used in smokeless powder, in rayon for parachutes, plastic for plane parts, shell and bomb cases, and shipping containers for ammunition, food, supplies, blood and plasma. The Extension Service provided instruction in using less fat and other strategic foods in cooking. There also was a shortage of surgical dressings, and several Bethel women, including Daisy LeClair, gathered at various locations on Main Street afternoons to roll bandages for use in the war effort.

By the fall of 1943 a can salvage campaign was begun with Henry Flint (1901-1951) as chairman, assisted by Elwood Ireland of Gould Academy and Doris Lord at the Bethel Grammar School. Detailed instructions were distributed as to

**MEMBER QUESTIONNAIRE**  
**Bethel Historical Society**  
**1986**

\_\_\_\_\_ name (optional)

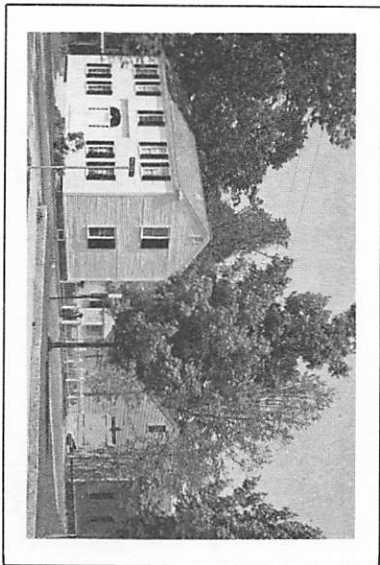
The following questions are included in this issue of the *Courier* to assist the long-range planning committee in determining membership sentiment regarding the Society's future direction(s). Please return to the Society, P.O. Box 12, Bethel, Maine 04217.

1. How did you become interested in joining the Bethel Historical Society?  
\_\_\_\_\_ personal contact    \_\_\_\_\_ general interest in history    \_\_\_\_\_ programs  
\_\_\_\_\_ museum    \_\_\_\_\_ newsletter    \_\_\_\_\_ other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
2. Are you satisfied that the present structure of organization (staff, officers, trustees, committees and volunteers) serve the organization well at this stage of its development? \_\_\_\_\_ yes  
\_\_\_\_\_ no    \_\_\_\_\_ not sure    Comments: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Do you feel the staff is effective in carrying out the mission of the organization? \_\_\_\_\_ yes  
\_\_\_\_\_ no    \_\_\_\_\_ not sure    Comments: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Do you have suggestions for improved or expanded use of the Society's headquarters, the Dr. Moses Mason House? \_\_\_\_\_ yes    \_\_\_\_\_ no    \_\_\_\_\_ not sure    Comments: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Do you feel the Society makes good use of its collections? \_\_\_\_\_ yes    \_\_\_\_\_ no  
\_\_\_\_\_ not sure    Comments: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Are you generally satisfied with the Society's current operations? \_\_\_\_\_ yes    \_\_\_\_\_ no  
\_\_\_\_\_ not sure    Comments: \_\_\_\_\_
7. What do you feel are the Society's greatest strengths? Please check any of the following:  
\_\_\_\_\_ exhibits    \_\_\_\_\_ monthly meetings    \_\_\_\_\_ publications  
\_\_\_\_\_ special events    \_\_\_\_\_ period house museum    \_\_\_\_\_ school programs  
\_\_\_\_\_ staff    \_\_\_\_\_ volunteers    \_\_\_\_\_ research facilities    \_\_\_\_\_ other  
(please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
8. What areas do you feel the Society needs to improve most? \_\_\_\_\_ membership services  
\_\_\_\_\_ programs    \_\_\_\_\_ special events    \_\_\_\_\_ exhibits    \_\_\_\_\_ publications  
\_\_\_\_\_ other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
Comments: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Do you feel the Society is effective in serving its community? \_\_\_\_\_ yes    \_\_\_\_\_ no  
\_\_\_\_\_ not sure    Comments: \_\_\_\_\_
10. What goals would you like to see the Society set for the future? \_\_\_\_\_ increased staff and space  
\_\_\_\_\_ more special events    \_\_\_\_\_ additional publications  
\_\_\_\_\_ more use of volunteers    \_\_\_\_\_ expanded craft program  
\_\_\_\_\_ expanded school programs    \_\_\_\_\_ other  
(please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
11. What would you be willing to do to see that the goal or goals you support are realized?  
\_\_\_\_\_ volunteer time    \_\_\_\_\_ pay additional dues    \_\_\_\_\_ serve on a committee  
\_\_\_\_\_ make a contribution for that purpose    \_\_\_\_\_ contribute more to the endowment  
\_\_\_\_\_ serve as an officer or trustee    \_\_\_\_\_ make a bequest in will  
\_\_\_\_\_ other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
12. Please make any specific comments you may have regarding the Society's activities and current operations. What would you suggest the long-range planning committee consider? Please use the reverse side (and/or additional sheets) for your answer.



## VISIT

**The Bethel Historical Society's  
DR. MOSES MASON HOUSE**  
on the Common at Bethel Hill  
Western Maine's Historical  
Research Center



- Period House Museum
- Research Facilities
- Special events, exhibits, lectures, and films

**Museum** open daily except Monday, July 1 to Labor Day, 1-4 p.m. and by appointment throughout the year. Please call 207/824-2908 or write P.O. Box 12, Bethel, Maine 04217. Groups and small conferences welcome.

**Research facilities** open Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and by special arrangement.

### National Register of Historic Places

Stanley Russell Howe, Ph.D., Director

## PERIOD HOUSE MUSEUM

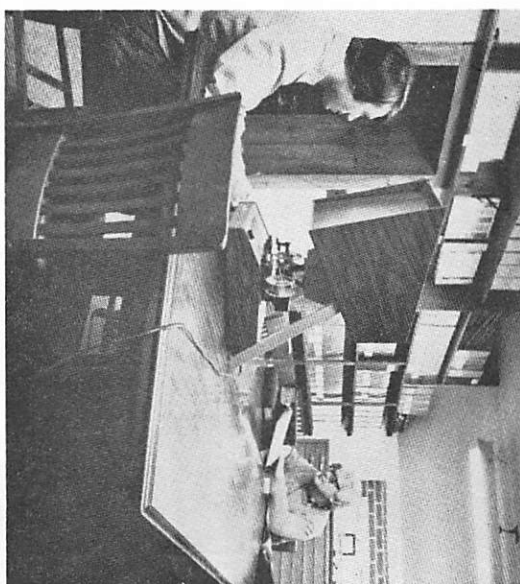


*Portraits of Dr. Moses and Agnes Straw Mason  
by Chester Harding (1792-1866) of Boston,  
noted American portrait painter*

DR. MOSES MASON (1789-1866), a physician and businessman, was one of Bethel's most prominent citizens, serving in many offices of public trust including two terms as United States Representative from Maine (1833-1837). His wife, AGNES STRAW MASON (1792-1869) was a leader in the temperance movement in Oxford County. The house contains eight period rooms appropriately furnished to reflect the life and times of Doctor and Mrs. Mason. Two of the prized items in the collections of the museum are autograph books kept by the Masons containing the signatures of Presidents John Quincy Adams, Andrew Jackson, and Martin Van Buren plus those of Henry Clay, John C. Calhoun and Daniel Webster.

## THE BETHEL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

THE BETHEL HISTORICAL SOCIETY was founded in 1966 and incorporated in 1971 as a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation. In 1974 it was given the fully restored Dr. Moses Mason House as its headquarters by the William Bingham II Trust for Charity. Its programs include monthly meetings, exhibits, lectures, school programs, and publications. A quarterly, "The Bethel Courier" is sent to all members. Total membership is now over 600 and applications are available at the Society office.

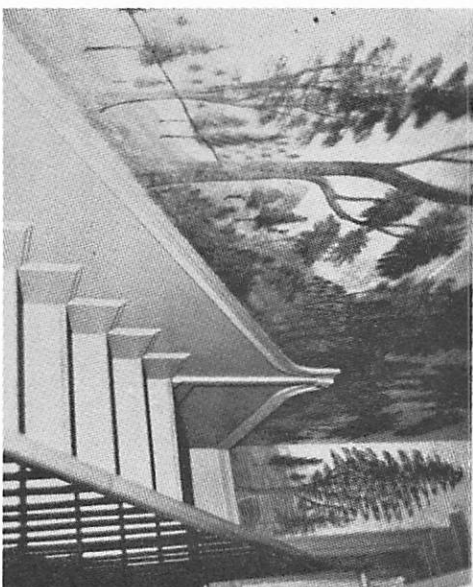


*Eva Bean Research Room*

## EVA BEAN RESEARCH ROOM

THE EVA BEAN RESEARCH ROOM, established in 1976 with funds provided by the William Bingham II Trust for Charity, honors the Bethel Historical Society's founder and former secretary. This archival facility contains hundreds of manuscript pages, maps and photographs relating to the Bethel area, the White Mountains and Oxford County. Also available on microfilm are several Oxford County newspapers and Bethel town records. In addition, there is a library of over two thousand books, periodicals and pamphlets relating to local and Maine history, the White Mountains, genealogy, and technical information. Historians, genealogists and others interested in researching the history of the area are welcome to use the facilities without charge.

*View of the stairway and murals by Rufus Porter or his nephew Jonathan Poor in the Dr. Mason House*





Bethel, a community of nearly 2500, was founded in 1774 as Sudbury Canada, after the original grantees from Sudbury, Massachusetts who fought in the campaign to conquer Canada in 1690. Settlement was so slowed by the American Revolution that there were but ten families in town at the time of New England's last Indian Raid in 1781, which resulted in three of Sudbury Canada's citizens being taken captive. Following the Revolution, settlement grew rapidly and in 1796 the town was incorporated and given the name "Bethel," from the Book of Genesis, meaning "House of God."

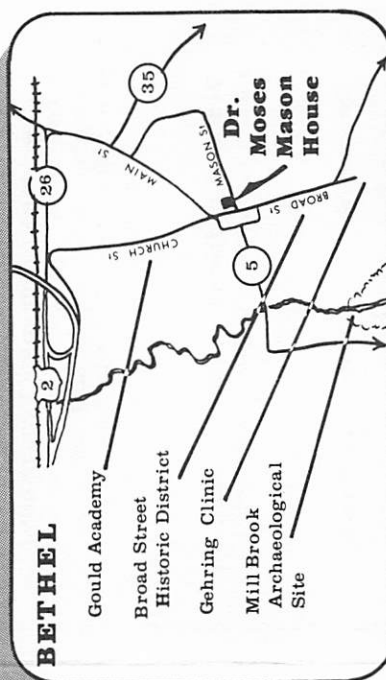
Farming was the principal occupation of the earliest inhabitants (and still is important today), but with the arrival of the Atlantic and St. Lawrence Railway in 1851 connecting Bethel to Portland and later Montreal, the wood products industry became (and remains) a major factor in the economic life of the community. In addition, the arrival of the railroad made it possible for summer visitors from Boston and New York to travel conveniently to Bethel to enjoy the town's extraordinary natural setting and to visit the White Mountains.

The town also has been a significant educational center due largely to the generosity of William Bingham II to Gould Academy, which was founded in 1836. Moreover, Bethel was the site of Dr. John Gehring's nationally famous clinic for the treatment of persons with nervous disorders and later became internationally known for the National Training Laboratory which was established in 1947 and continues to specialize in human dynamics.

Bethel's cultural life was enriched by the presence of William Rogers Chapman (1855-1935), who founded the Maine Music Festival (1897-1926), which brought to Maine and often to Bethel some of the world's finest artists and orchestras.

The Society maintains a selection of modestly priced gifts and historical publications. Visitors will find unique pictured tiles, engraved notepaper and old maps in the museum store. Also available are pamphlets on a number of topics ranging from Mollycckett, a regionally famed Indian woman who befriended several of the early settlers of Oxford County, to a walking tour guide of the Broad Street Historic District. Books on the history of Bethel and the surrounding area can be found here as well as special commemorative T-shirts and museum tote bags. In addition, art and architecture books relating to the collections of the Bethel Historical Society are often in stock.

Within a fifteen mile radius of Bethel Hill, as indicated on the map, there are a number of attractions of interest to the visitor and researcher. These places represent some of the better preserved and significant reminders of the area's development during the past one hundred fifty years. Detailed information on each site is available at the Society's headquarters.





how tin cans were to be flattened for use in the nation's defense program.

On another front, an army caravan appeared in Bethel about this time to emphasize the importance of wood in fighting fascism. Also bolstering Bethel's defensive effort was the fact that the local state guard, now numbering some sixty members, had placed an order for a machine gun.

At the end of October 1943 the town was shocked with the news that second selectman John Howe and his cousin William Hastings of East Bethel as well as the brother of D. Grover Brooks had drowned in Umbagog Lake. Among the mourners at the Howe-Hastings funerals in East Bethel was their cousin, C. D. Howe, who interrupted his leadership of Canada's war production program to come to Bethel.

By 1944 it was reported that German prisoners-of-war were working in the woods near Milan, New Hampshire for the Brown Paper Company (now James River) of Berlin. Wood had in fact become such an important strategic material that the Bethel railroad station was viewed as a vital shipping point. In addition, plans were made (but never executed) to greatly expand the rail facilities so even more wood might be transported for wartime use.

D-Day also came in 1944 and with it the loss of Lawrence Perry of West Bethel in France. There also was in the same year a campaign in Bethel to collect milk weed pods for use in life jackets. In this case twenty cents was being offered for each bag of 800 pods.

In the elections during the fall of 1944 Bethel selected Republican Horace Hildreth for governor by a vote of 309 to 60 for his Democratic opponent. The liquor question found the town voting once more for prohibition (this time by a 3-1 margin), and Bethel voters preferred Thomas E. Dewey over President Roosevelt, 489 to 253.

By the beginning of 1945, attention began to turn toward the postwar period. Hopes were high that the war would soon be over and life might return to normal. It was not to be so soon since Japan did not formally surrender until September 1945. Before that time many of the wartime restrictions were gone. The *Citizen* carried the entire text of the proposed United Nations Charter, which was seen as the best hope for avoiding another catastrophic war. By April 1945 the local Lion's Club was collecting funds for European relief. The next month James Alger was released, and by the fall the *Citizen's* overseas edition had been suspended.

With the war ended Bethel people, along with the rest of the world, rejoiced that at last the difficult years of conflict were over. Bethel had lost fifteen sons, and several others had been wounded. All who returned home seemed anxious to get on with their lives so decisively disrupted by the war. The conflict had brought sacrifice and scarcity to Bethel as it had to the nation. It had meant bond and scrap metal drives to support the United States defense effort. It had resulted in inconvenience to many and profound grief to others, especially those with loved ones. Some had received more restricted materials than others; "the black market" had worked in Bethel as it did in the nation but on a greatly reduced scale. There had been some local inefficiency and disorganization in directing Bethel's response to the war, but nothing like that which had prevailed on the federal level.

There were few (if any) khaki-whackies (sloppily dressed teenage girls wearing bright red lipstick who flocked to men in uniform) in Bethel, but prices did (despite the best efforts of the Office of Price Administration) rise sharply in the town



*HOME GUARD at Gould Academy during World War II.  
Photo courtesy of Donald S. Brown.*

(nationally 47% between 1939-1945). Many Bethel people did listen to the radio (comedy shows such as Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy, Jack Benny, Bob Hope, Fibber McGee and Molly were particularly favored), play card and board games, and read paperbacks (extremely popular during the war years) like other citizens throughout the nation. There were, however, few sandbuckets in attics or stirrup pumps under roofs in Bethel. Hoarding was a common form of recreation in town as it was nationally despite the unpatriotic associations which its practice raised. Cigarettes were hard to obtain in Bethel as they were in much of the country. Bacon and cheese did become almost a memory in Bethel as they did nationally, and there were attempts in this community as was the case throughout the United States to portray the housewife as a soldier (like the men in combat overseas) preserving in her kitchen vital war resources.

What can be learned from all of the above? It is safe to say that in general Bethel accurately mirrored much of what can be seen as characteristic of the period on the domestic front. What exceptions there were have been pointed out in the course of this article or assumed to vary due to factors of geography or special circumstances. One final development also separated the town from some other communities. A municipal airport was inspired by the war effort and became a reality in November 1945. It represents a permanent legacy from a most trying and turbulent era.

For further reading see John Morton Blum, *V Was For Victory: Politics and American Culture During World War II* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich, 1976), Aloph A. Hoeling, *Home Front, U.S.A.: The Story of World War II Over Here* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1966), Richard R. Lingeman, *Don't You Know There's A War On? The American Home Front 1941-1945* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1970), Geoffrey Perrett, *Days of Sadness, Years of Triumph: The American People 1939-1945* (Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin, 1974) and Richard Polenberg, *War and Society: The United States, 1941-1945* (Philadelphia: J. P. Lippincott, 1972).

## **BETHEL, MAINE ROLL OF HONOR, WORLD WAR II**

*EDITOR'S NOTE: The following names were once on a large sign erected in 1945 near the Civil War soldier's monument, corner of Main and Mechanic Streets. They were recorded by Edmond J. Vachon prior to sign's removal in the 1950s. This list is courtesy of Society Life Member Vachon.*

ARMY: Arthur Bennett, Leroy Bennett, Lawrence Bartlett, Robert Billings, Kenneth Brooks, James Bryant, Russell Burris,

Paul Carter, Stanley Carter, Lloyd Chapin, Milan Chapin, Winona Chapin, Donald Kimball, Robert Chapman, Fred Currier, George Currier, Arthur Gilbert, Gardner Gorman, Arthur Gray, Frederick Grover, Norman Hale, Bradley Hall, Edward Holt, Raymond Holt, Sidney Howe, Royden Keddy, Robert Lowe, Roderick McMillin, Olin Morgan, Edward Robertson, O'Neil Robertson, Henry Robertson, Winfield Robertson, Martin Therriault, Murray Thurston, Floyd Thurston, Homer Tibbetts, Frank Trimback, Rodney Wentzell, Henry Westleigh, Chester Wheeler, Harry Wilson, M. D., Freeman Stevens, Augustus Kennaugh, Freeland Clark, Roland Hatfield, Robert Greenleaf, Bruce Scarborough, Wallace Saunders, Addison Saunders, Earlin Whittamore, Gilman Hutchinson, Richard Hinckley, Albert Wheeler, Edward Wheeler, Clayton Bane, Robert Morrill, Ernest Angevine, Harold Tibbetts, Horace Tibbetts, Freeman Merrill, George Schools, Herman Lizotte, Avery Angevine, Thomas Kennaugh, Rudolph Belanger, William Tibbetts, Donald Morrill, Ruel Swain, James Farwell, Chester Harrington, Norman Wetherington, Elgin Tibbetts, John Bean, Charles D. Merrill, Jane Chapin, R.N., Emerson Clough, Earl Beane, Alton Cross, Donald Cross, Stewart Cross, Louis Cross, Donald Brown, Hugh Brown, Merton Brown, Vernon Brown, Norris Brown, Robert Browne, Cecil Conrad, Donald Chretien, Clayton Crockett, Stanley Gallant, Ernest Gallant, Guy Gibbs, Alfred Taylor, George Parsons, Ernest Perkins, Carlos Smith, Philip Daye 2nd\*, Herschel Ryerson, Reginald Ryerson, James Ryerson, Albion Smith, Delmar Morgan, Archie Stevens, Edward Swan, Harold Young, Richard Young, Robert Annis, Robert McCrea, Harris Tyler, Lawrence Tyler, Harry Vashaw, Bruce Bailey, Shirley Chase, Everett Chase, Rodney Chase, Rodney Eames, Francis Holt, Linwood Machia, Charles Raimsey, Wilfred Baker, Albert Kimball, Edmond J. Vachon, Gerald Walker, Nadine Atwood, WAC, George Brown, Lee Hutchins, Everett Cole, Tracy Dorey, Joseph Cote, Willard Bean\*, Harold Rolfe, Fred McKenzie, Herbert Cairns, Eldon Coolidge, Leslie Johnson, Joseph Merrick, Elwood Ireland, Jr., Lendon Collins, Frank Swan\*, Isaac Dyer 2nd, Malcolm Farwell, Robert Davis, Fenton Robertson, Albert Foster, Rufus Rice, O'Neil Larravee, John Currier, William Robertson, John Spinney.

**NAVY:** Charles Anderson, Harold Anderson\*, Clayton Sweatt, Edward Bean, Raymond Bartlett, Alonzo Chapman, Edgar Coolidge, Richard Lyon, Albert Buck, Levi Baker, Jack Gill, Donald Holt, Kenneth Lovejoy, Guy Parker, Raymond Saunders, Homer Smith, Jr., Harold Chapman, Robert Perry, Clarence Morgan, Eva Ladd, WAVE, Roderick Hawthorne, Luther Tripp, Kathleen Wight, RN, Lillian Leighton, WAVE, Cleveland Lovejoy, John Twaddle, MD, Gerard Williams, Minta Williams, WAVE, Maynard Austin, Richard Sweetser, Warren Bean, Robert Kellogg, Lincoln Merrill, Rebecca Bailey, WAVE, Harold Marshall, Richard Kirk, Susie Lovejoy, WAVE, Richard Peabody, Ellen Peabody, WAVE, Edgar Rainey, Earlon Paine, Edward Hanscom, Bernard Bartlett, Dean Farrar, Edward Casey, William Robertson, Richard Marshall, Richard Bryant, Mellen Kimball, Victor Books, O'Neil Saunders, Phyllis Davis, RN, Horace Littlefield, Jr., Arthur Chayer, Dana Enman, Donald Stanley, Robert Keenan, Paul Chapman, Arthur Fogg, Gilbert LeClair, Lewis Cole, Jr., Lloyd Lowell, Walter Grover, George Bryant, Glendon McAllister

**MARINES:** Dana Brooks, Shirley Gilbert, Donald Luxton\*, Kenneth Saunders, Dale Thurston, Trafton Bartlett\*, George Luxton, Howard Grover, Laurice Morrill, Frank Gibson, Jr.

**AIR FORCE:** Stanley Allen\*, Romeo Baker, Francis Berry, Irving Brown, Ernest Brown, Parker Brown\*, Eugene Burns, Charles Chapin, Stanley Davis, Sidney Dyke, Ernest Grover, Arthur Gibbs, John King, Charles Lowe, Alfred Lovejoy, William

Von Zintl, Ray Mills, Dwight Morrill, Wallace Morgan, Harold Merrill, Stanley Merrill, Ethelyn McMillin, WAF, Christino Onofrio\*, Frank Parsons, Lawrence Perry\*, Elmer Ryerson, Charles Smith\*, Gardner Smith, Howard Thurston, Lewis Kellogg, Ashley Tibbetts RCAF\*, Richard Bean, Robert Kirk, Elaine Warren, WAF, Hugh Scarborough, Sheridan Chapman, Fillmore Clough, Irving Cummings, Paul Stearns\*, Robert Moore\*, Robert King, Raymond Tripp, Linwood Wheeler.

\* Killed in Action or Died in Service



*Virginia Smith (Hutchins) in her Home Guard Auxillary uniform, 1943.*

*Photo courtesy of Arline Greenleaf Brown.*

### **NEW LIFE MEMBERS**

William and Margaret Cousins, Bethel, are teachers at Gould Academy and for SAD #44 respectively. He also serves as moderator of the Bethel town meeting and she is a member of the Society's membership committee.

Hugh S. and Mariann E. Durgin live in Newry and are very interested in genealogy.

Charles Heino, Boothbay Harbor, is a retired superintendent of schools and a former teacher and principal of Crescent Park School, Bethel.

Reona Bean Heino, Boothbay Harbor, is a graduate of Gould Academy, class of 1950.

Norma R. Jodrey, Bethel, is retired and a graduate of Gould Academy, class of 1934.

Roger E. Robertson, Northridge, CA, is a retired attorney and a descendant of Samuel Robertson of Bethel.



*West Bethel students decorate graves at Pine Grove Cemetery, V-J Day, 1945.*

*Photo courtesy of Olive A. Head*

## BOOK REVIEW

Dorothy J. Holden, *THE LIFE AND WORK OF ERNEST M. SKINNER* (Richmond, Virginia: The Organ Historical Society, 1985) 300 pp., \$28 cloth.

Once or twice every summer during the early 1950s, a disreputable old car driven by an elderly white-haired man used to turn into my driveway on Broad Street. My parents and I were always glad to welcome Uncle Ernest, even though we knew that keeping him entertained might prove something of a chore. The first item on the agenda, however, was always the same: "I want to call on Mabel." And he and I would drive out to Woodland Cemetery to visit my aunt's grave. Then back to the village, his car sometimes barely making Mill Hill, and a series of calls on old friends: Dan and Ada Durell, Susie Edwards, who was a cousin and school chum of Mabel's, sometimes Muriel Park Mason.

Usually we wound up in my front parlor where I would play for Uncle Ernest the pieces I was currently learning, often including some he had given me. Sometimes one of these had been dedicated to him by the composer. I didn't realize then that the piano which I played them on (and still play today) had been bought especially for Mabel when she was a girl, and that it was in that very parlor that she and Ernest had been married in March 1893.

In the evening we sometimes went to the movies, but more often we rocked on the front porch, while he and my parents reminisced, and exchanged greetings with passers-by. Then next morning he would return to the Skinner camp on Lake Winnepesaukee until the next time he felt the need to "call on Mabel."

I doubt that few Bethel people, even those who knew him best, recognized the true stature of this distinguished-looking old man or understood the reputation he had established as probably the greatest pipe organ builder of his day. In the 1920s and 1930s the Skinner organ was generally recognized as the finest built in America. St. Thomas Church, St. Bartholomew's, and the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York, the chapels at Princeton University, the University of Chicago, the auditoriums at the University of Michigan and Yale, Trinity and Old South Churches in Boston's Copley Square — these were only a few of the great Skinner organs, and hundreds of smaller instruments were to be found in churches and homes all over the country. And in 1938 at age 72 when most men are either

retired or considering retirement, Ernest built what is often considered his finest achievement, the organ at the National Cathedral in Washington.

Dorothy J. Holden, who with her husband tunes and services pipe organs, fell so under the spell of the beauty of Skinner organs that she has written a book about them and their creator. Carefully researched and admirably written, *The Life and Work of Ernest M. Skinner* traces the career of a man who was at once an inventor, a mechanical wizard, and one for whom music was the breath of life. She deals most movingly with Ernest's final years when, because of the new interest in the classic Baroque organs, the romantic Skinner instruments were being drastically rebuilt or abandoned altogether. When Ernest died in 1960 at age 94, he felt his life work had been a failure, that everything he had believed in had been repudiated.

But the pendulum of taste has continued to swing; today's organists now recognize Skinner organs as among the greatest musical achievements America has produced. Now, instead of rebuilding them, churches and concert halls are restoring them to their original glory and treasuring them as great works of art. Boston this year has seen the latest step in this saga of rediscovery.

In 1915 a large Skinner organ was installed in New Old South Church next to the Boston Public Library in Copley Square. About 1955 at the height of the Baroque craze, that organ was replaced by a more classical instrument. Some society members may have read last fall of the complete redecoration of this famous church, one of Boston's great buildings.

The climax of this church restoration and rejuvenation project was the installation (at a cost of well over a million dollars) of a huge Skinner organ from a Minnesota municipal auditorium which was being razed. I like to think of Uncle Ernest peering out of some heavenly porthold and shaking with laughter at such an unexpected turn of events.

(continued on page 8)

### SOCIETY OFFICERS AND TRUSTEES

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(Book Review, continued from page 7)

He rests today next to Mabel in Woodland Cemetery. His daughter chose a monument "with the likeness of church windows on either side of the Skinner name, an appropriate choice, since her father had worked most of his life to 'beautify the service in the house of worship.'" At his feet the marker is simplicity itself and, for lovers of organ music all over the world, makes a statement at once obvious and irrefutable: "Ernest Martin Skinner; Great American Organ Builder."

Not all the opinions expressed in this review, written at the request of the editor, can be called unprejudiced or objective. For one thing, I provided the author with a good deal of her information and am cited in the text with some regularity; for another, I edited the first half of the manuscript. It's not too surprising, therefore, that I think it's a good book. The organs, however, are something else again. No true lover of organ music should miss the opportunity to hear the instruments in Trinity Church, Boston; Woolsey Hall at Yale; or Washington's National Cathedral. No more beautiful instruments have ever been created. This is not just *my* opinion; it is fact.

Edward H. Hastings

*A graduate of Wesleyan and Harvard universities, Edward H. Hastings, organist and English teacher extraordinaire, is retiring this spring as Dean of Curry College, Milton, Massachusetts.*

### MEMBER PROFILE

**Charles Errol Heywood (1894-1980)**

**First President of the Bethel Historical Society**

Charles Errol Heywood was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, February 7, 1894, the son of Charles Henry and Cora Eaton Heywood. After graduation from Worcester Polytechnic Institute as a mechanical engineer, he was employed by the Society of Automotive Engineers, Chauce Vaught Aircraft Company and by the Elastic Stop-Nut Corporation of America, retiring in 1954.

At the first meeting of the Society in May 1966, he was elected as president, serving in that capacity until 1968. He also wrote a history of Upton, Maine that was published in 1973. From the time of his retirement until 1976, he and his first wife, the late Gladys Jones Heywood, made their home on Broad Street, Bethel in the house built by Judge Addison E. Herrick in 1885. They were the parents of two children, Charles Eaton and Joy Yarnell who is a life member of the Society.

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Charles Errol Heywood Photo courtesy of Joy Yarnell

Beginning in 1928, he and his family spent many pleasant vacations at their summer home on Mill Road in Upton. This house was built by his uncle, George H. Heywood, as a year-round residence in 1910. After the sale of the Broad Street house, Mr. Heywood and his second wife, Ellen Murlis Heywood, divided their time between Upton and their winter home in Crystal River, Florida.

Happy times on Umbagog Lake and in the surrounding countryside with his children and grandchildren helped develop Mr. Heywood's interest in the preservation of unique natural areas for future generations to enjoy. In the 1960s he became chairman of the then completely volunteer Maine Chapter of the Nature Conservancy. In that capacity he was instrumental in the acquisition of Wight Brook Step Falls in Newry, Turtle Island (and other coastal islands) and Springvale Rhododendron Stand by the Nature Conservancy. He also provided impetus for the formation of Grafton Notch State Park and of Katahdin Iron Works State Historic Monument. The Step Falls preserve in Newry, the Maine Chapter of the Nature Conservancy's first acquisition, was dedicated to his memory in 1983.

Mr. Heywood will long be remembered for his strong interest in the Society and his numerous donations to its collection.

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